



LASSEN COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION
UNAPPROVED MEETING MINUTES

May 1, 2003, 1:00 p.m.
1345 Barry Creek Plaza, Suite B
Susanville, California

Commissioners Present: Karol Merten, Doug McCoy, Bobby Malone, Janice Irvin, Shannon Gerig, Alternate, Jim Chapman, Elizabeth Elam, Mae Sherman, Kathy Colvin, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Sheral Thorlaksson, Patsy Jiminez, Alternate Member Brian Dahle

Commission Staff: Laura Roberts

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Chairperson, Karol Merten called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. The Chairperson welcomed everyone, and all introduced themselves.
2. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner Elam moved that the amended agenda be approved as presented, Commissioner Malone seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.
4. **Consent Calendar:** The consent calendar was presented. Commissioner Malone moved to approve the consent calendar. Commissioner McCoy seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.
5. **Nominating Committee:** Chairperson Merten explained the duties of such a committee. Commissioners Merten, Malone, McCoy volunteered for the committee. Commissioner Elam moved that the volunteers be appointed as the committee. Commissioner Gerig seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Commissioner Merten will call the committee together for a meeting. A slate of officers will be presented at the next meeting.
6. **Summer Meeting Schedule:** Commissioner moved that the July meeting be cancelled. Commissioner Colvin seconded the motion. There was no discussion, the motion carried.
7. **Mini Grant Request:** The request of Cheryl Smith for a new preschool was discussed. Commissioner Elam commented that this grant request provides an opportunity for more children to be served and she recommended that the grant be approved. Commissioner McCoy questioned some aspects of the grant, supporting documentation of the need, and some other questions regarding qualifications and budget justification. Commissioners Elam and Malone explained that Cheryl Smith has been in child care for many years, and has been approached by the Episcopal Church to establish a preschool at that location. Commissioner Malone explained that the preschool licensing process is underway. Further questions were presented regarding the equipment that was formerly at that location. Commissioner Merten commented on the application. Commissioner Elam

moved that the grant be approved. Commissioner Malone seconded the motion. Discussion of the mini grant review process ensued. Commissioner McCoy conveyed his thoughts about being sure that the items proposed for purchase are appropriate and in compliance with new playground laws, etc. Commissioner Sherman stated that there is a playground at the location. Language to this effect can be added to the MOU. Commissioner Chapman questioned the difference between income and projected expenses and can the difference be used to purchase equipment. Since this is not a state funded preschool, it will receive no startup funds from the state as some preschools do. Commissioner Merten stated that we need to have a presentation on Child Care Management 101 so that Commissioners will understand applications such as this one better when they come up. Commissioner Malone called for the question. Commissioners Gerig, Irvin, Malone, Sherman, Colvin, Elam, and McCoy voted to approve the motion. Commissioner Chapman voted not to approve the application. The motion carried.

Commissioner Chapman commented that we should not start items on the agenda before the times indicated. If we are going to post times for items on the agenda, we must adhere to them.

8. **Statement of Economic Interest:** Each Commissioner turned in their forms. These will be turned in to the County Clerk's Office on Friday.

9. **Strategic Plan Review:** The Vision Statement was reviewed. It was felt that it is still appropriate for the Commissions work.

The Mission Statement was reviewed. Commissioner Gerig suggested that the word "attachments" be changed to "relationships". It was commented that the word "attachment" is a child development term which may be unfamiliar to those not in the field of child development. It was suggested to use both terms, "loving attachments and relationship". Comments were made about use of the term "integration" because the Commission is doing more than integrating. The Commission encourages coordination, and also the development of services to fill gaps. Other changes were suggested. Consensus was obtained for the following revised Mission Statement:

The Lassen County Children and Families Commission is designed to support and encourage, on a county-wide basis, a comprehensive coordinated system of early childhood development services. The focus of the Commission is on health care, quality childcare, parent education and effective intervention programs for children, prenatal to five years of age, and their families. Children and their parents and caregivers will be provided with opportunities necessary to foster secure, healthy and loving attachments, (i.e. relationships).

Goals were reviewed. The following revised goals were agreed upon by consensus:

- Support a comprehensive, coordinated system of care that maximizes existing resources and minimizes duplication of services.
- Ensure that every child from birth through age five reaches his or her developmental potential and is ready for school.
- Promote physical and mental health for all children from birth through age five.
- Support effective parenting, and improving the lives of families.

The **Summary of Needs** was reviewed. It was suggested that we leave the needs listed as presented and add a paragraph indicating areas the Commission has impacted through its investments. Commissioner Merten asked if there are any needs known that are not mentioned. Commissioner Colvin questioned respite care, stating that it is a great need that has no funding to support it. It was suggested that we include a new needs assessment in our scope of work for the next year. Informal Child Care was discussed. The new CARES initiative contains a requirement for outreach to and inclusion of informal childcare providers. It was suggested that we not allocate a specific amount of funds until the CARES application is developed and presented at the next meeting.

Strategic Plan Priorities were reviewed: It was suggested throughout the document, replace the word “integrate” with “coordinate”. It was suggested that we remove goal “c” under Improved Systems for Families.

The existing Improved Family Functioning goals were reviewed and changes were suggested in timelines. The Improved Child Development focus area was reviewed. It was suggested that the wording regarding training opportunities for childcare providers be modified to reflect a broader use of local resources beyond the Oral Health Task Force. The need to include a focus on children’s mental health was expressed. The impact of the mental health training that was provided was questioned. Are children 0-5 receiving mental health services now as a result of the training? It was suggested to add the development of a mental health initiative under the Improved Child Health objectives. Laura is to bring information to the Commission at future meetings regarding what children’s mental health initiatives look like in other areas of the State.

Allocations and Financial Plan: The proposed changes in the Allocation and Financial Plan were reviewed. Minor corrections were made.

Draft Projected Annual Budget: The draft budget was reviewed. It was suggested that \$50,000 be allocated for the development of a children’s mental health initiative. The thoughts about developing an informal childcare initiative or an early literacy initiative were discussed. Rather than specifically identify these initiatives, it was suggested that \$10,000 be put in a category called “Emerging Programs” from which other needs could be met at a later time. This was determined to be the best way to plan at this time because larger initiatives such as the new CARES Initiative, include some focus on informal childcare. Other existing

programs can incorporate the early literacy efforts. Laura is to revise the budget and the ten-year fiscal projection document for the June meeting.

10. **CARES Project Continuation – Authorization to Apply:** The CARES Project RFA has been received for another two year phase. Whether to participate was discussed. Commissioners Malone, Elam stated that the CARES Project has been extremely successful during the past two years and they highly recommended participating in another two years. The full financial commitment is not clearly understood, however, at a minimum it will be \$50,000. Commissioner Elam made a motion to authorize completion of the application for participation in the second CARES Project. Commissioner Malone seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

11. **Other:** The contract with ABS ends on June 30, 2003. Laura suggested that the contract not be renewed, and that the PEDS software offered at no cost by the Statewide Evaluation Team be utilized instead. In light of the declining revenues it was felt that this would be the most cost effective way to proceed. Commissioner Chapman stated that we must be sure to have a copy of our data from the existing ABS system before the contract ends. It was commented that the ABS software provides a good platform for a county-wide system of electronically meeting family's needs, however, several other county departments are utilizing other types of software and were not willing or able to switch to ABS. So even though the concept is a good one, the cost is not something that the Commission can bear alone. Since PEDS is provided at no cost, we will move ahead with that.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura J. Roberts
Executive Director